

This is an epidemic that needs to be resolved. Recent reports indicate that nearly 22 veterans commit suicide every day. In 2012, more than 349 Active-Duty service men and women across the four branches took their own lives. That is an average of 1 every 25 hours, the highest suicide rate ever in the DoD.

It is not just about resources. In fact, having an adequate number of mental health professionals is just one component of ensuring access to care.

Former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta testified in a hearing the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense held last year that he was unsatisfied with the Pentagon's current approach to combating military suicides and admitted that the DoD needs to review its procedures for handling mental health cases. Secretary Panetta said that there are still huge gaps in the way a mental health diagnosis is determined. Furthermore, Secretary Panetta acknowledged that the greatest obstacle to service men and women receiving necessary mental health treatment is the stigma that continues to be associated with seeking help for psychological injuries.

Throughout Maryland, I hear from service men and women who believe that seeking mental health services will hurt their military careers. We must overcome these real and perceived barriers to care by changing the policies that govern how we provide mental health care to our military members. Those who are hurting in silence will seek treatment only when they can truly speak freely and off the record. As more and more of these individuals go untreated, we will continue to see a rise in suicides and other tragic incidents among our military members and veterans.

Even as we wind down our combat operations in Afghanistan over the next year, I fear that we will continue to see an increasing number of our military members and veterans needing mental health care in the near future.

Yet the DoD now is facing looming furloughs and unnecessary funding cuts, which could force the DoD to lose many of the highly valued mental health and behavioral professionals who were hired to help treat soaring rates of PTSD. Recently, Dr. Jonathan Woodson, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, stated his concerns over the DoD's long-term capability to provide mental health care to the force, to counter the effects of PTSD. More than one-half of the mental health specialists serving the military are civilians, and they have options to seek employment elsewhere. I worry about sustaining this valuable workforce under constant threat from sequesters.

Mr. President, we need to ensure that we have the personnel, resources, and policies in place to guarantee access to quality mental health care for our men and women in uniform, our veterans,

and their families. Active-Duty service men and women especially need access to such care without fear of being stigmatized of suffering career-damaging consequences. Providing such care isn't just a good idea to maintain the well-being and readiness of our troops; it is our solemn moral obligation to those who have sacrificed so much for our great Nation. It is important for us to remember that—especially during Mental Health Awareness Month and as we approach Memorial Day.

#### REMEMBERING CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT ARDEN HASSENGER

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to remember an Oregon hero. CMSgt Arden Hassenger was a 29-year-old from Lebanon, OR, when he and five other airmen set out on Christmas Eve 1965 on a reconnaissance trip over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Tragically, they never returned. What was even more tragic for Hassenger's friends and family, though, was that the plane could not be found. His wife and children lived in uncertainty for decades, not knowing whether Arden had been killed that day or whether he was alive in Laos.

Finally, the crash site was located, and in 2010 and 2011, remains of the missing men were at last recovered. Last year, they were buried with full honors in Arlington National Cemetery. This Sunday, Arden's ultimate sacrifice for our Nation will be honored once again at the Vietnam Memorial. The cross next to his name, which signified his status as missing in action, will be changed to a diamond, representing that he has returned home to rest after these many years. I hope that this final act of remembrance will help to bring closure to his family and all who loved him.

We honor Chief Master Sergeant Hassenger, and we thank him and his family for the tremendous sacrifice and service they have given to our Nation.

#### REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT M. BROWN

Mr. KAIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a fallen airman who died in military service to this country. U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Robert M. Brown, of Portsmouth, VA, was lost on Nov. 7, 1972 in his F-111 near Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. The remains of Lieutenant Colonel Brown were located in North Vietnam and returned June 7, 1995. He was finally identified on December 14, 2011 and accounted for on February 25, 2012.

Robert Brown graduated from the US Naval Academy in the top 30 percent of his class and was given his choice of branch of service. He chose the US Air Force and trained as a pilot while adding to his bachelor of military science degree with an electrical engineering degree from the University of Michigan. Before his first deployment he was assigned to NASA and worked on the

Mercury and Gemini Space programs. During his first tour of duty in Southeast Asia in 1966, Major Brown compiled an impressive record of 299 combat missions while flying the F100 Super Sabre. Upon returning to the United States, he went to work in Research and Development for America's Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems program as a project scientist. In 1972 he returned to Vietnam for his second tour as a highly decorated fighter pilot to fly the most advanced combat aircraft of its time—the F111A Aardvark.

On November 7, 1972, the F111A crew, call sign "Whaler 57" departed Takhli Airbase, Thailand on a single aircraft strike mission. Its target was the Luat Son Highway ferry and ford nestled in a populated and forested area where the highway crossed over the river approximately 24 miles south of the major port city of Dong Hoi. After reporting that its mission was proceeding normally, radio contact was lost after 0400 and by 0500 a 2 week long search and rescue effort was commenced.

Efforts to recover "Whaler 57" were unsuccessful, but the remains of Lieutenant Colonel Brown have finally been found and identified. Lieutenant Colonel Brown is survived by his sister Gail and his children Beverly, Margie, and Bruce. Today, I ask all Members of the Senate to join me as we honor the life and legacy Lt. Col. Robert M. Brown, and the other Americans in our Armed Forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. There are no words fitting enough to fully express our thanks.

#### WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to Winston-Salem, NC, which I proudly call home. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the consolidation of the towns Winston and Salem. Before their consolidation, each town had a long and prosperous history. Salem was established in 1766 by members the Moravian Church. Today, Old Salem Museum and Garden still shows life as it was 200 years ago. It features the iconic 12-foot tall coffee pot first erected by Julius E. Mickey to attract customers to his tin shop in 1858 and the Moravian Easter Sunrise Service in God's Acres cemetery has been a yearly tradition since its inception in 1773. The town steadily increased in influence and commerce activity and was incorporated by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1857.

In 1849, Salem sold the land to its north to Forsyth County to serve as the county seat. The land was named Winston, in honor of local Revolutionary War hero, Joseph Winston. Ten years later the town was incorporated. In the 1870s the town was connected to the North Carolina Railroad. This gave way to many factories; Reynolds and Hanes being the largest. Their healthy competition helped Winston grow remarkably over the next three decades.